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SUBJECT: INDIAN AMBASSADOR IN SEOUL TO PARTICIPATE IN
OCTOBER 31 APDP MEETING

REF: SECSTATE 107528

1. (SBU) In an October 17 meeting with MEA Under Secretary Vishwesh Negi and Korean Embassy Counselor Lee Jeongkyu, Policy Planning Staffer Daniel Twining urged the MEA to consider sending a Joint Secretary level official to the Asia Pacific Democracy Partnership (APDP) senior officials meeting in Seoul on October 31. Twining's request followed the ROK embassy's delivery of a similar demarche last week. At that time, the MEA had said that the Indian Ambassador in Seoul would attend the meeting, but the ROK instructed the Korean embassy to push for Joint Secretary level representation.

2. (SBU) Negi expressed GOI fatigue with the numerous democracy promotion initiatives, specifically the Bali Democracy Fund (BDF) and the Community of Democracies (CD). He noted that the GOI considers the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDF) as the preeminent forum for democracy promotion and questioned the effectiveness of establishing regional groups. Twining explained that APDP is specifically focused on aiding fledgling democracies to strengthen their capacity, especially regarding free and fair elections. He also remarked that the BDF's character is very different, as both China and Burma are members.

3. (SBU) Regarding GOI participation, Twining emphasized that nearly all other participants have honored the ROK's intention to hold a senior officials meeting by agreeing to send appropriate high-level delegates. He specifically underlined Indonesia's willingness to send a Joint Secretary level official, adding that now India is the only "question."

Twining and Lee contended that in order to shape the regional discussion with the gravitas befitting India, the GOI should send a senior official from Delhi who handles multilateral affairs -- rather than an ambassador mainly concerned with bilateral relations. Negi promised to relay the message to his Joint Secretary, but tempered the assurance with the caveat that the timing of the Seoul meeting may preclude higher level participation.

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